

DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL		
SUBJECT:	MEETING 4 – COMBATING LONELINESS FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORKING AGE ADULTS		
DATE OF DECISION:	8 DECEMBER 2016		
REPORT OF:	SERVICE DIRECTOR – LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Mark Pirnie	Tel: 023 8083 3886
	E-mail:	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Richard Ivory	Tel: 023 8083 2794
	E-mail:	Richard.ivory@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
Following the framework for loneliness interventions developed by the Campaign to End Loneliness, the fourth meeting of the Combating Loneliness in Southampton Inquiry will focus on identifying what works effectively to combat loneliness for children, young people and working age adults.	
RECOMMENDATION:	
(i)	The Panel is recommended to consider the comments made by the invited experts and community representatives and use the information provided as evidence in the review.
REASON FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	To enable the Panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the review process.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	None.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
3.	As identified at the inaugural meeting of the inquiry there are a number of factors that increase our vulnerability to loneliness. At the November meeting the focus was on older people as loneliness is often perceived as a problem that can be particularly associated with those in later life. However, although much less attention has been paid to how loneliness affects other age groups evidence is emerging identifying the prevalence of loneliness amongst the wider population.
4.	Research commissioned to assess the changing face of social interaction in the UK by the 'Big Lunch' found that two-thirds of adults have experienced loneliness at some point. This is reflected in the findings from the recent City Survey that identified that 14.6% of the 16+ population in Southampton are

	lonely compared to 15.9% of the over 65 population. In both of these surveys the views of those under 16 are not represented.
5.	The Campaign to End Loneliness website provides links to research that shows that loneliness in the UK peaks at two points in our lives; those aged 25 years and under and those aged over 65 years tend to experience the highest levels of loneliness.
	Loneliness – Children and young people
6.	The Big Lunch survey identified that loneliness is significantly higher in 18 to 34-year olds, with 83% saying they have experienced loneliness. According to Get Connected, a helpline for people under 25, we are “seeing a rise in loneliness among young people”. The charity speaks to over 3500 young people each year experiencing emotional and mental distress. They propose that the reasons for this increase could be the “relentlessly challenging social, study and work environment that is high stress and fast paced” or even how the media and the internet present “unattainable visions” of what a ‘perfect life’ should involve.” Once this is combined with the “fundamental change in relationships and communication” brought about by the rise of the internet, it is perhaps not so hard to understand why so many young people are feeling lonely. There is a prestige attached to having huge numbers of online ‘friends’, but this doesn’t necessarily lead to feeling truly connected in the real world.
7.	Psychologists also believe that teenagers are especially vulnerable to loneliness because their brain is still developing and teenagers can misread other people’s emotions – teenagers may also feel isolated as they struggle to establish their own identities. The fear of being excluded is also particularly heightened amongst children and teenagers.
	Loneliness – Middle aged
8.	Middle age can be a time when potential triggers of loneliness, such as early retirement, children leaving home, relationship breakdown and even bereavement can begin to accumulate. 25% of women aged forty-five to fifty-four suffer from a common mental health disorder such as depression and anxiety, which in turn can lead to loneliness.
9.	A snapshot survey by the Samaritans in 2013 revealed that a quarter of contacts from men were about loneliness or isolation. The charity highlighted the likelihood of social disconnection among men in mid-life, particularly if unemployed and without a partner. It points out that men in mid-life can often be quite dependent on female partners for emotional support; often having fewer ‘peer’ relationships than women, finding it harder to talk about emotional issues with peers or to make new friendships, so any breakdown in relationships can be especially difficult. This is exacerbated by the finding from the Big Lunch Survey that identified men, on average, spend 10 minutes less a day interacting with others than women.
	Groups identified as being at greatest risk
10.	Evidence presented to the Inquiry Panel has already identified, amongst others, the following groups as being at high risk of loneliness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people who do not conform to local norms of

	<p>appearance, language or behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people NEET • Young people and adults who care for others • Teenage mothers • Mothers of young children • Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people • People in ethnic minority groups • People with long-term conditions and disability • People who are unemployed • Working-age men • People who suffer from addiction • Homeless people.
11.	<p>Given that loneliness is experienced by almost everyone at some point in their life for many varied reasons it is not possible to consider each of the above risk factors at the inquiry meeting. Given the characteristics of the city, details outlined above, and the information available the focus at the meeting will be on the following risk factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loneliness experienced by carers • Loneliness experienced by children and young people • Loneliness experienced by working age men / homelessness • Loneliness and mental health
12.	<p>To help inform the discussion the following individuals / organisations have been invited to attend the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers in Southampton & Southampton Young Carers Project – There are 6.5 million people in the UK caring unpaid for an older or disabled family member or friend and the number is increasing. Carers are identified as being at risk of loneliness, caused by a range of factors, many of which are imposed on them. <p>In Southampton a number of organisations provide support for carers. Carers in Southampton is a service for anyone who gives up their time, unpaid, to look after a family member, a friend, or a neighbour who needs additional support. Their mission statement is:</p> <p><i>To empower the ‘Silent Army’ of carers in Southampton by providing support, advice, guidance and learning opportunities to improve carers’ choice, control and independence.</i></p> <p>Southampton Young Carers Project provides a service for children and young people aged between 8 – 18yrs whose lives are affected by caring for an unwell or disabled family member. The person they care for may have a physical or learning disability, mental ill health, chronic illness or have difficulties with drug/alcohol use. The project is part of Southampton Voluntary Services.</p> <p>To help inform the discussion on carers and loneliness, attached as Appendix 1, is an extract from the Campaign to End Loneliness publication, ‘Alone in the crowd: Loneliness and diversity’, that examines the issue of caring alone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Limits & Youth Options - No Limits offers free and confidential information, advice, counselling, support and advocacy for under 26 year olds. Youth Options provides help and support to young people in

	<p>Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. They do this through activities and social education programmes which develop, inform, educate and entertain in an atmosphere of honesty, fair play and responsible concern for themselves and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Pastors - Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about their community. Street Pastors engage with people on the streets to care for them, listen to them and help them. They work together with other partners in the night-time economy to make communities safer. • Solent NHS Trust, Homeless Healthcare Team - A multi-disciplinary primary care team providing care to homeless people in Southampton • Solent Mind & Southampton City Council Public Health – Loneliness can be detrimental to our mental health and well-being. Some surveys report that two thirds of people affected by a mental health problem feel lonely often or all of the time. People with severe mental health problems are amongst the most isolated social group of all. They are often judged for their condition and fear rejection from others. Loneliness is both a cause and an effect of mental distress. <p>Solent Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem in the South of England. Southampton City Council’s Public Health Team work towards improving the health and well-being of the people of Southampton.</p> <p>To help inform the discussion on mental health and loneliness, attached as Appendix 2, is an extract from the Campaign to End Loneliness publication, ‘Alone in the crowd: Loneliness and diversity’, that examines the issue of loneliness and mental health.</p>
13.	The report from the Campaign to End Loneliness – ‘Promising approaches to reducing loneliness and isolation in later life’, identifies that loneliness is amenable to a number of effective interventions. At the fourth meeting of the inquiry the Panel will be informed of good practice that is being delivered or planned in Southampton to reduce loneliness for children, young people and working age adults, as well as highlighting where improvements can be made to reduce the gaps in provision.
14.	The guests invited to present information at the meeting will take questions from the Panel relating to the evidence provided. Copies of any presentations will be made available to the Panel.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
15.	N/A
<u>Property/Other</u>	
16.	N/A.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	

17.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.	
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>		
18.	None	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
19.	None	
KEY DECISION?		No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:		None directly as a result of this report
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	Alone in the crowd: Loneliness and diversity - Chapter 2 , Caring Alone	
2	Alone in the crowd: Loneliness and diversity - Chapter 8 , The most terrible poverty – Loneliness and mental health	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	None	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None	